

Belgian and German Arrested for Debauchery

BY PHANN ANA
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Police in Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville have arrested a Belgian national and a German national in recent days on suspicion of sexually abusing children, police and court officials said Tuesday.

Belgian national Bessape Philippe, 47, was arrested Saturday evening in a raid on a Phnom Penh guest house, said Keo Thea, deputy chief of the municipal anti-sex trafficking and child protection unit. A 13-year-old boy was in Philippe's bed at the time, he said, adding that Philippe had been imprisoned once already for pedophilia in Belgium.

"He's guilty. He was jailed for three years [because] he sexually abused three Belgian boys aged 14 to 16," he said.

Phnom Penh Deputy Chief Prosecutor Nget Sareth said the municipal court charged the Belgian on Tuesday with debauchery.

Sihanoukville police on Monday morning arrested German national Watrin Alexander Moriex, 36. Police received information from homeless boys, ranging in age from 7 to 15, who claimed Moriex had repeatedly paid them to have sex with him, said Bei Sivanna, chief of Sihanoukville's anti-sex trafficking police unit. "We arrested him based on four victims'

complaints," he said. "The prosecutor charged him with debauchery and detained him."

Police officials said that both arrests were prompted by information from the French anti-pedophilia NGO Action Pour les Enfants.

"They weren't hiding their close contact with the children," said APLE Director Beatrice Magnier, adding that the organization had been in consultation with German and Belgian police based in Bangkok.

APLE staff had observed both suspects in public in the presence of their victims, she said.

(Additional reporting by Douglas Gillison)